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CIA Tie to Case Here Stirs Interest

By JOE HIGGINS

In various parts of the nation and even the world, people who worry about the doings of the top secret Central Intelligence Agency will be focusing their attention on Buffalo this week.

For at the U.S. Courthouse here, the government Tuesday will start its trial of four men on charges of engaging in a conspiracy to export warplanes to Portugal without obtaining a government license.

Newspapers and magazines throughout the nation have taken a great interest in the case, mostly because the question of CIA complicity has been raised. In addition, publications in as widely separated places as England and Australia have devoted much space to the case.

The four defendants claim they were charged as the result of an interagency mixup; that the federal agents who arrested them were unaware that the exports were designed to aid Portugal in a fight with rebellious Africans in Angola and that the CIA was behind the scheme.

U.S. Atty. John T. Curtin, who will prosecute the case, scoffs at the claim and sees it as a device that may become a "standard defense" in future criminal cases.

Characteristic Silence

The CIA, of course, has said nothing and apparently doesn't plan to say anything.

Charged with conspiring to violate the Neutrality Act by exporting B-26 bombers, weapons and spare parts are:

Henri M. E. de Maria de

Montmarin, 58, of Paris, France; John R. Hawke, 28, of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.; Keat Griggers, 41, of Jamestown, Calif., and Woodrow W. Roderick, 29, of Tucson, Ariz.

A fifth man, Gregory R. Board, 45, formerly of Tucson, is out of the country and cannot be extradited.

Curtin, who will be aided during the trial by Asst. U.S. Atty. Richard J. Lehner, expects the trial to last about two weeks.

The indictment alleges that in the spring and summer of 1965 seven B26 bombers of a planned 20 were exported. Charges were brought in Western New York because some of the craft are alleged to have crossed the Canadian border here on their way to Europe.

French Aristocrat

De Montmarin, a French Count, is alleged to have been stationed in Paris to locate B26s and to have made contact with Board. Roderick allegedly contracted to buy the planes through a Tucson firm, and Hawke, a former RAF stunt pilot, is alleged to have made flights with Griggers.

Conviction of violating the act or conspiring to violate it could bring prison sentences ranging from two to five years and fines ranging from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

The men, except for Board, all have pleaded innocent and are free on bail. De Montmarin still maintains the government had no "probable cause" to arrest him and a motion to this effect will be argued Monday in a preliminary to the main trial.

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